

# Prehistoric pottery from Littlehampton (HRL 05) — final report

by Mike Seager Thomas (2/5/10)

The prehistoric assemblage from Littlehampton comprises 254 sherds weighing 2898 grams. Two period groups are certainly represented — Middle Bronze Age, represented by rim sherds from two thick-bodied Deverel-Rimbury (DR) bucket urns in characteristic coarsely flint-tempered DR fabrics (pots 1 and 2) (Fig. 1), and a few body sherds of the same; and Late Bronze Age, represented primarily by sherds from two burnt, large thin-bodied post Deverel-Rimbury (PDR) jars, one shouldered in a medium to coarse flint-tempered fabric, (pots 3) and one convex-sided, possibly with a ‘hooked’ rim, in a coarse flint tempered fabric (pot 4) (Fig. 1), sherds from which occurred together in contexts [14–16]. In addition a single context [59] yielded a sherd in a corky, grog-tempered fabric, probably of Early Bronze Age date (Table 1).

## *Deverel-Rimbury*

DR pottery comes from contexts [4], in which it was associated with later material, [8] and [22]. It is dated by direct analogy with similar material from elsewhere in Sussex. Both the forms and fabrics are widely paralleled regionally. For example, analogues for Pot 1 and its fabric, *VCF*, were present at Mile Oak (Hamilton 2002, fig. 2.30), and analogues for Pot 2, the rim of which is fingertip impressed, and its fabric, *CF1*, were present at New Barn Down (Curwen 1934, fig. 17) and Kimpton in Hampshire (Dacre & Ellison 1981, fig. 18):

### *Coarse flint, CF1*

10% medium sand- to small granule-sized burnt flint and sparse to common (not precisely quantifiable) fine to medium quartz sand.  
Pot 2.

### *Very coarse flint, VCF*

15% medium sand- to large granule-sized burnt flint and common (not precisely quantifiable fine quartz sand. Pot 1.

In addition, a tiny sherd in a fine to medium flint-tempered fabric (*FMF*) associated with pot 1 *might* be a DR fine ware (cf. Seager Thomas 2008, pl. 1.10). Owing to a similarity between it, however, and the finest grade of the fabric comprising PDR pot 3 (see below), its precise dating here must remain uncertain.

### *Post Deverel-Rimbury*

The limited range of PDR fabrics from Littlehampton — when compared to the local koine as a whole (Littlehampton Bypass, Ford, Wickbourne etc.) suggests an earlier rather than later attribution for the assemblage overall. The small number of pot represented in it, however, inhibits close dating. Pot 4, and another, smaller convex-sided jar (pot 5) from the same group of contexts, would be at home in an early plain ware assemblage. Most closely diagnostic, however, is pot 3, whose plain cordon was paralleled on Chanctonbury Ring and at Ford, both of which yielded late PDR pottery (Hamilton 2001, fig. 10.21; 2004, fig. 13.29), and which as a complete pot is closely paralleled in a developed plain ware assemblage from Highstead, Kent (Couldrey 2007, fig. 71). The Littlehampton pot is of intrinsic interest because of the presence of a post-firing perforation below the surviving rim, which suggests that the use of the pot might have changed.

#### *Fine flint, FF*

3–5% fine to medium sand-sized burnt flint and common (not precisely quantifiable) fine quartz sand. Two very thin sherds associated with fabrics *MF* and *CF1*.

#### *Medium flint, MF*

15% fine to very coarse sand-sized burnt flint. Sparse to common (?) quartz sand. Pot 4.

#### *Medium to coarse flint, MCF*

15% fine to very coarse sand- to medium granule-sized burnt flint and common (not precisely quantifiable) fine quartz sand.

#### *Coarse flint, CF2*

15% medium sand- to very large granule-sized burnt flint and sparse to common (?) fine to medium quartz sand, possibly with rare glauconite.

The interest of the assemblage is threefold. Firstly the presence of EBA pottery — which is not well represented locally — is of note. Tiny assemblages of this sort are increasingly typical of finds of this date on the Plain (e.g. at Climping and Drayton — unpublished) and, on the one hand need interpretative explanation, and on the other, alert us to the possibility of more of the same kind. Secondly, the direct association of large sherds of PDR pottery of types usually associated with different phases of the tradition, has implications for our understanding of pottery curation during the LBA. Finally, the difference between the PDR fabrics and forms at Littlehampton and elsewhere in and around the town — notably Ford and Wickbourne, suggests that these sites were occupied at different dates,

adding to the evidence for shifting settlement on the Plain during the Late Bronze Age.

### *Catalogue of feature sherds*

- 1) Internally rounded rim of thick-bodied bucket urn. Fabric *VCF*. Irregularly fired roughly smoothed surfaces. Deverel-Rimbury. CONTEXT 008
- 2) Squared, fingertip impressed rim of convex-sided jar. Fabric *CF1*. Unoxidized surfaces. Deverel-Rimbury. CONTEXT 022
- 3) Very large thin-bodied round (?) shouldered jar with plain cordon on neck/ shoulder and slightly out-turned rim. Post-firing perforation below rim. Flat base. Fabric *MCF*. Heavily fingered/ horizontally furrowed. Weathered/ burnt surfaces. Post Deverel-Rimbury. CONTEXTS 014-016
- 4) Heavily gritted base and thin body sherds of round shouldered jar, Fabric *CF2*. Heavily fingered burnt surfaces. Post Deverel-Rimbury. CONTEXTS 014-016
- 5) Rounded to squared (?) rim of thin-bodied convex-sided jar. Fabric *MF*. Fingered. Irregularly fired, roughly finished surfaces. Post Deverel-Rimbury. CONTEXT 016

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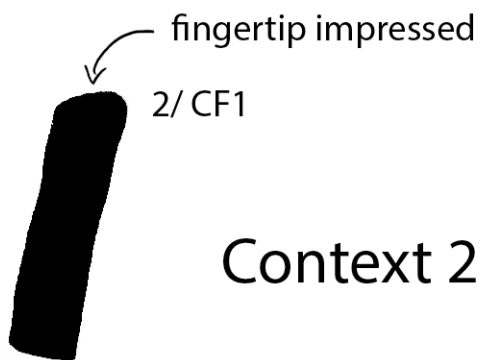
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Context 22

*Littlehampton*

*HRL 05*

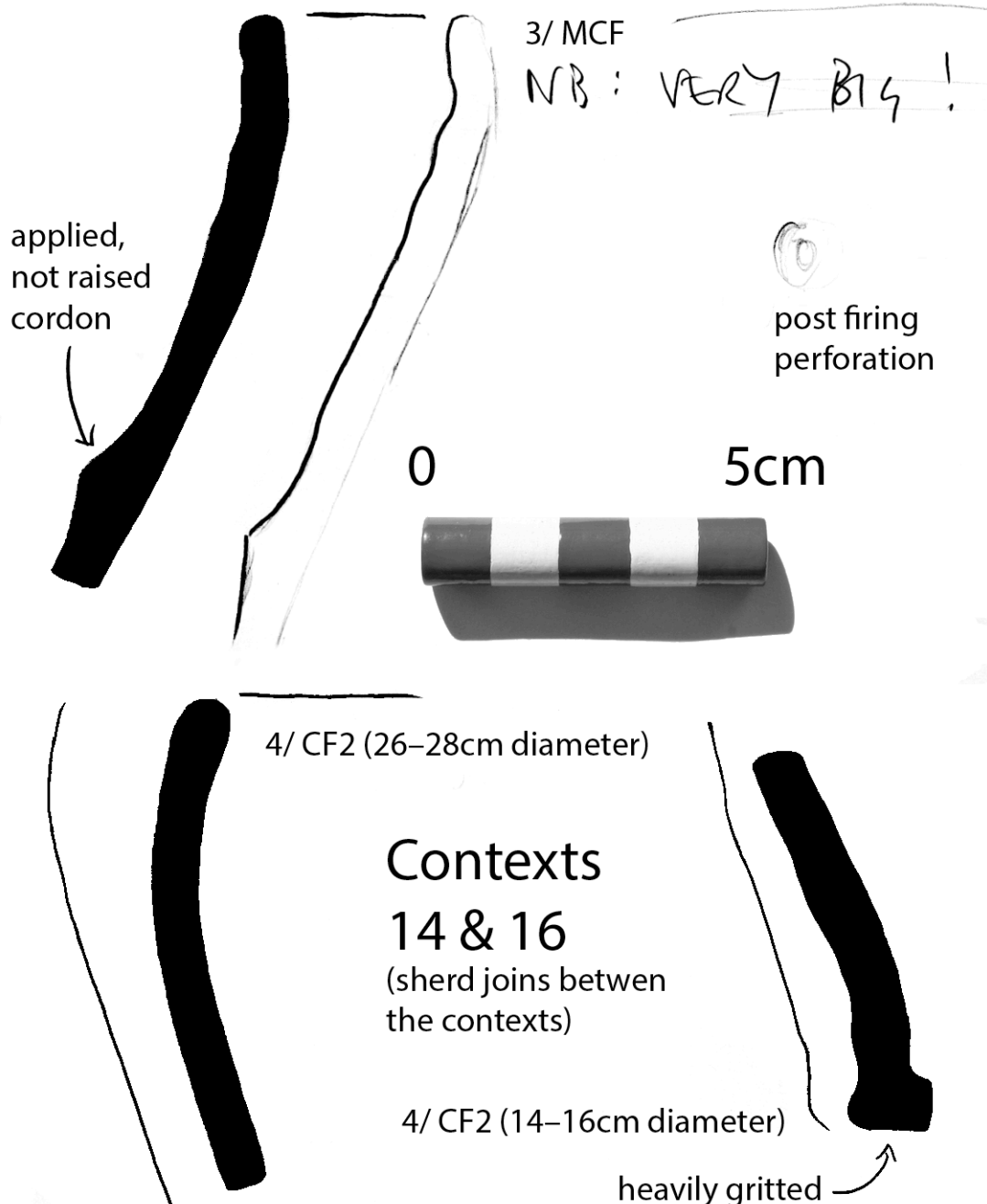


Figure 1: Deverel-Rimbury (pot 2) and post Deverel-Rimbury (pots 3 and 4) from Littlehampton

Context	Fabrics/ date															
	EBA															
			MBA													
			LBA													
	G		CF1		VCF		FMF		FF		MF		MCF		CF2	
	sherd numbers/ weight in grams															
004			32	368									2	14		
008					1	44	1	1								
014									1	2	1	5	17	321	69	984
015									1	1	1	2	3	13	4	27
016											36	210	50	237	22	531
022			9	98												
047															2	21
059	1	1									1	18				
Σ	1	1	41	466	1	44	1	1	2	3	39	235	72	585	97	1563
Red = comprises/ includes <i>typologically</i> diagnostic sherd(s)																

Table 1: Fabric quantification/ dating — Littlehampton (HRL 05)